

The Resilient Library Newsletter

February 21, 2021

Volume 5, Issue 3

PLEASE NOTE:

Many of the images and underlined text in this newsletter have hyperlinks to their corresponding websites.

Press Click or Ctrl+click on images and underlined text to be directed to those websites.

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How I Beat 'Cooking Fatigue' During the Pandemic

After months of being home, the novelty has worn off and cooking has become a repetitive chore.

Here's how I got excited about making food again.

By Vidya Rao

In the early days of stay-at-home orders, so many of us collectively discovered the joys of cooking But after months of being home, the novelty has worn off and cooking has become a repetitive chore.

A recent survey of 2,000 Americans, conducted by OnePoll on behalf of Sun Basket, found that 55% of Americans are experiencing "cooking fatigue." Respondents said they cook an average of nine times a week, yet they've eaten the same meal 28 times since the pandemic started. Unsurprisingly, most people say they're ordering more takeout and wish that instead they could cook themselves healthy meals faster.

I love to cook, but it only took a few weeks for me to fall into this rut. After a glass (or two) of wine ..., I was desperately in need of comfort and didn't have the patience or energy to cook dinner. Didn't I just make banana bread (aka lunch)? Let's order delivery. For my husband and me, that was \$40 when I didn't order an appetizer or emotional support cookies, and more like \$50 to \$60 once fees and a generous tip were factored in. By May, we were paying the price. We'd gained weight and lost a lot



of money. I was out of work. We came to the realization that things weren't going back to the way they were pre-pandemic, and we couldn't stay stuck in a vicious cycle of avoiding the grocery store and eating takeout.

In pre-pandemic life, my husband and I were avid travelers, building our itineraries based on where I wanted to eat. Since I could no longer have that experience in the same way, I decided that I needed to get myself excited about my own cooking. (My husband, on the other hand, has no problem eating the same dry chicken breast every single day, and half the time he doesn't even know what he's eating.)

If I couldn't experience the world, I'd at least attempt to bring the world to us. I pushed myself to add new dishes to my

repertoire. . . . In the span of a week, I made Thai curry from scratch, maafe (a West African peanut stew), jerk chicken, Moroccan tagine, vadouvan curry and pork simmered in Cuban mojo sauce.

I get more and more excited about these creations and actually looked forward to cooking. In a way, they've given me a sense of purpose and a few moments of meditative calmness in an otherwise dark time. And while I've tried to seek out authentic recipes and learn their cultural heritages, I don't pressure myself about making these dishes perfectly. My only litmus test is that the food is edible.

I've also used cooking as an opportunity to connect more deeply with my Indian roots and my mom, who I haven't seen since last fall. My mom is a brilliant cook who doesn't use recipes; she just cooks with her senses, the way elders of every culture seem to do. I desperately missed her masala dosa, so she FaceTimed me and taught me how to make it, along with her cilantro chutney

I'm not going to lie to you: All this food variety takes planning and work. But we now only eat takeout twice a week max and, by incorporating the following tips, I've managed to make it sustainable so I'm not spending every waking hour cooking.

Plan Ahead

Since we try to avoid going to the grocery store too often, ahead of the weekend, I make a general meal plan and buy my staples and ingredients for one or two new dishes that I want to experiment with for the week. For inspiration, I scour old cookbooks, marinate on memories of dishes my mom used to make or just think about where in the world I wish I could be eating at the moment.

Cook Before You're Hungry

When you're hungry and staring at the fridge hoping a solution will magically reveal itself, you've already lost the battle. This is not when you want to experiment with making your own 15-ingredient curry from scratch. This is when you end up throwing cheese on a piece of bread and calling it dinner or spending way too much on take-out.

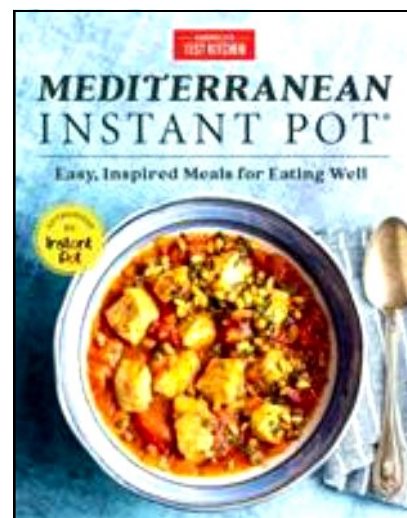
Make Ahead and Freeze

The Instant Pot and vacuum sealer are now indispensable tools for me. I pressure-cook staple like dried beans that I can freeze and thaw and have ready for later use. I slow-cook big batches of chili, stews, and meat overnight a couple times a week, doing about 10 minutes of prep for them after I've eaten dinner. I save a couple of servings in the fridge and then freeze and vacuum-seal the rest in individual portions. I prep and freeze sides like roasted root vegetables. I don't want to eat the same thing back to back, but in the future, I can thaw and eat what I've already made on days I don't have time for or interest in cooking, especially for lunches. The best part? It makes cleanup really easy during the week.

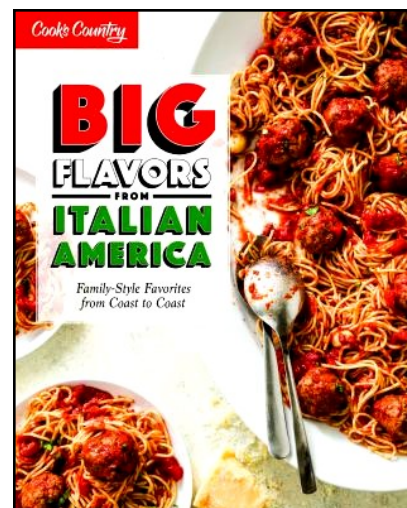
Stock Up On Sauces and Spices

I've invested in buying a variety of spices and spice mixes ... Use these in rubs and marinades to make even simple roast chicken transcendent. You can also cook a big batch of meat or fish with a basic rub and then use additional spices to make different flavored pan sauces or gravies that will breathe new life into your leftovers. □

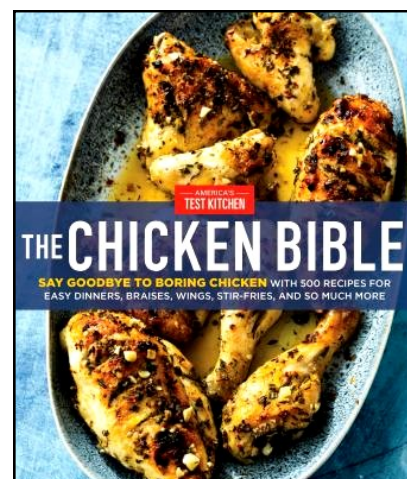
Excerpted from [How to beat 'cooking fatigue' during the pandemic \(today.com\)](#)



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www.rvl.info



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Loneliness among the elderly has been linked with a multitude of health problems—including heart risks and even a higher risk of premature death. But a small new study is shedding some light on a tool that could help combat loneliness among this age demographic: Mindfulness meditation.

The study, published in the journal [Brain, Behavior & Immunity](#), shows that eight weeks of training in mindfulness meditation is linked with decreased loneliness.

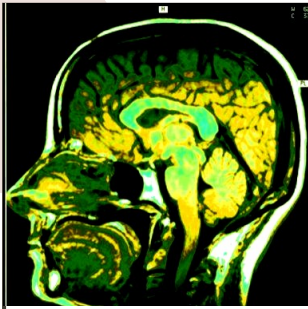
The study included 40 participants between ages 55 and 85, some of whom participated in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program. People who participated in the program were also asked to do meditation exercises at home for a half-hour every day, and to go to a meditation retreat for one day.

Plus, the researchers from Carnegie Mellon University found that mindfulness meditation had positive effects on the study participants' health, too.

"Reductions in the expression of inflammation-related genes were particularly significant because inflammation contributes to a wide variety of the health threats including cancer, cardiovascular diseases and neurodegenerative diseases," study researcher Steven Cole, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine, said in a statement.

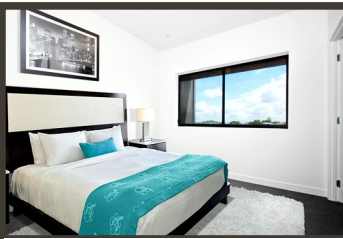
Aside from loneliness, mindfulness meditation has also been shown in past research to have positive effects on the brain—linked with brain changes that may even have effects against mental illness, according to a recent *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* study. □

Excerpted from [Mindfulness Meditation Could Combat Loneliness In Elderly: Study | HuffPost Life](#)



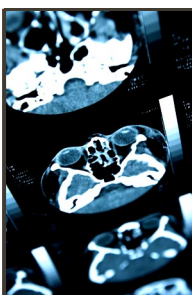
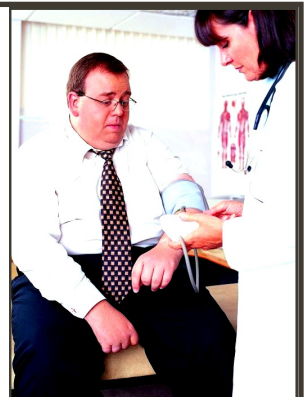
It Makes Your Brain Plastic—Quite literally, sustained meditation leads to something called neuroplasticity, which is defined as the brain's ability to change, structurally and functionally, on the basis of environmental input. For much of the last century, scientists believed that the brain essentially stopped changing after adulthood. But research by University of Wisconsin neuroscientist Richard Davidson has shown that experienced meditators exhibit high levels of gamma wave activity and display an ability -- continuing after the meditation session has attended -- to not get stuck on a particular stimulus. That is, they're automatically able to control their thoughts and reactivity.

It Can Protect Your Telomeres—Telomeres -- the protective caps at the end of our chromosomes -- are the new frontier of anti-aging science. Longer telomeres mean that you're also likely to live longer. Research done by the University of California, Davis' Shamatha Project [has shown that meditators have significantly higher telomerase activity than non-meditators](#). Telomerase is the enzyme that helps build telomeres, and greater telomerase activity can possibly translate into stronger and longer telomeres.



It Can Be Better Than Sleeping—In a 2006 study, college students were asked to either sleep, meditate or watch TV. They were then tested on their alertness by being asked to hit a button every time a light flashed on a screen. The meditators did better than the nappers and TV watchers -- by a whole 10 percent.

It's Better Than Blood Pressure Medication—In 2008, Dr. Randy Zusman, a doctor at the Massachusetts General Hospital, asked patients suffering from high blood pressure to try a meditation-based relaxation program for three months. These were patients whose blood pressure had not been controlled with medication. After meditating regularly for three months, [40 of the 60 patients showed significant drops in blood pressure levels](#) and were able to reduce some of their medication. The reason? Relaxation results in the formation of nitric oxide which opens up your blood vessels.



It Increases Gray Matter—A 2005 study on American men and women who meditated a mere 40 minutes a day showed that they had thicker cortical walls than non-meditators. What this meant is that their brains were aging at a slower rate. Cortical thickness is also associated with decision making, attention and memory.

The poster features a central illustration of a Black woman skydiving with a green parachute, wearing a red jumpsuit and goggles, with her arms raised in a 'V' sign. Below her, the text 'Whatever your retirement dream is ... make it happen' is prominently displayed. Underneath this headline are three sections of text, each with a bold heading and a link. At the bottom, there are two illustrations: an elderly man with a white beard and glasses meditating in a lotus position on a red mat, and an elderly couple riding a motorcycle, with the man wearing a bandana and sunglasses.

AMERICA Saves
START SMALL. THINK BIG.

Whatever your retirement dream is ... make it happen

CHECK ON SOCIAL SECURITY: Find out what you can expect to receive when you retire. Visit mySSA.gov.

MAKE A PROMISE TO YOURSELF: Take the [America Saves Week pledge](#) if you haven't started saving.

SAVE A LITTLE MORE: A little change can make a big difference. See how much with Fidelity's [Power of Small Amounts tool](#).



Links for the poster above: mySSA.gov

[America Saves Week pledge](#)

[Power of Small Amounts tool](#)

Save Automatically

Hashtags of the Day #SaveAutomatically, #ASW2021, #SplitToSave

The easiest way to save? Automatically! It doesn't matter how much or what you're saving for, when you make the smart decision to have a portion of your income automatically deposited into a savings account, you have increased your chance for success. On this day, take action by setting up automatic transfers through your employer or financial institution to achieve your savings goal.

Save for the Unexpected

Hashtags of the Day: #Save4TheUnexpected, #EmergencySavings

The past year has taught us that we have to be as prepared as possible for the unexpected. While we all have future savings goals, having an emergency fund to support present unaccounted for needs, like a car breakdown, dental bill, or appliance repair should be a top priority. On this day, prioritize building an emergency savings fund.

Save to Retire

Hashtags of the Day: #Save2Retire, #ASW2021

It's never too soon to prepare for retirement. In fact, the earlier you start to prepare the easier it is to save. Because we know that very few Americans have a plan for retirement savings that will actually cover their desired lifestyle, on this day set aside time to understand your retirement needs and make a plan to meet them.

Save by Reducing Debt

Hashtags of the Day: #ReduceDebt, #PayingDownDebtIsSaving

It's time that we recognize that by paying down their debt, Americans ARE saving! Actively reducing your debt means you're saving on interest, avoiding late fees, and maintaining or increasing your credit score. On this day, acknowledge and celebrate paying down debt as a form of saving and an important component of your financial plan.

Save as a Family

Hashtags of the Day: #SaveAsAFamily, #ASW2021

How much better would Americans be with money if we were intentional about teaching good money and savings habits at a young age? Today, focus on the tangible and intangible ways you can positively model and influence children and teens when it comes to money, spending habits, and saving. □

Excerpted from [America Saves Week](#)

Daily Themes

Save Automatically

Monday, February 22

Save for the Unexpected

Tuesday, February 23

Save to Retire

Wednesday, February 24

Save by Reducing Debt

Thursday, February 25

Save as a Family

Friday, February 26

Links to articles and resources from the [AmericaSaves.org for Savers](#) website:

- [Five Saving Strategies](#)—Get started with one of our top five saving strategies.
- [Creating a Budget](#)—The first step to saving more efficiently is to keep track of what you spend and budget. Find a system that works for you and stick with it.
- [54 Ways to Save Money](#)—54 ways to cut back spending and save some cash.
- [Financial Products](#)—Not sure where to put the money you save? These accounts can help keep your money safe, secure, and growing.
- [Saving at Tax Time](#)—Learn how to use your refund to pay down debt and save instead of buying something you might not really need.

By Elizabeth Scott, MS

As anyone who's watching their weight will tell you that hunger is just one of many reasons that people eat. Those with a tendency toward [emotional eating](#) are especially vulnerable to making poor choices.

If you're an emotional eater, you may find yourself eating to deal with uncomfortable emotions, using food as a reward when you're happy, and craving sweets or unhealthy snacks when stressed. Don't worry—you're not alone! The following ideas can help you to cut down emotional eating and develop healthier eating habits, even when you're stressed.

Awareness Is Key

Awareness can be the most powerful aspect of change. Becoming more aware of how emotional eating plays out for you is the first step. Emotional eating is sometimes called "mindless eating" because we often don't think about what we're doing and let our unconscious habits or drives take over.

A mindful approach to eating can be helpful, but before you can put it into practice, you should become aware of how you feel *right* before you eat.

The trick is to be more aware of why you're eating when you eat. One way to check in with yourself is to maintain a food journal, either in physical form or as an app you can install on your phone.

If you have to log what you eat right

How to Stop Emotional Eating From Stress

before you eat it, you may realize you're eating for the wrong reasons, and can then move onto another approach to deal with your feelings. Once you break the habit of mindlessly reaching for food, it becomes easier to put the next list of techniques into place.

Find Relaxation Techniques

When you're under stress, your body is likely producing higher levels of [cortisol](#), a stress hormone that tends to make people crave sweet and salty food—the stuff that's generally not good for us. If you're experiencing [stress](#) on a regular basis and aren't finding ways to relax your body relatively quickly, cortisol could be creating these cravings, as well as contributing to other health problems. The following [stress relievers](#) for busy people can help, you can create a simple stress management plan, or you can find stress relievers that fit with your specific situation.

Cope in Healthy Ways

Many people use food to deal with uncomfortable emotions like anger, frustration, and fear. While we need food for survival, there are healthier ways to cope with emotions:

- **Talking to a friend:** Social support can go a long way toward helping you process your feelings, gain support if needed, and move on.
- **Journaling:** Processing one's feelings in a journal have been found to have many health benefits beyond mere stress management. When you feel like reaching for unhealthy food, reach for a pen instead.
- **Exercise:** Getting your body moving is a great way to blow off steam and get your endorphins going, and is a much healthier option than overeating.

Face Your Problems

If you're using food to muffle your feelings in a difficult relationship, try [assertiveness](#) instead. If food is your only treat at a job you hate, try techniques for [finding satisfaction at your job](#), or get a different one. If you look to [solution-based coping mechanisms](#) to cut down on the stress in your life, you won't need food to help you cope.

Use Mindfulness Exercises

Many people have successfully staved off cravings or greatly reduced the amount of "stress" food they eat by practicing mindful eating.

Mindfulness, the act of being present and aware, can help people get out of the habit of acting on their cravings without thinking.

Mindfulness exercises are simple to learn and wonderful for promoting resilience to stress in general, so your really can't lose.

Try Healthy Alternatives

If these techniques don't completely eliminate your emotional eating urges, go ahead and indulge—but use healthier fare. Drink Perrier instead of soda; munch on veggies or healthy snacks instead of chips; savor one small piece of dark chocolate instead of binging on a whole chocolate muffin from the coffee shop. All of these things can be good for you, so you'll still come out ahead without feeling completely deprived. □

Excerpted from [How to Stop Emotional Eating From Stress \(verywellmind.com\)](#)

At a Glance

- Modeling of SARS-CoV-2 spread in Hunan, China showed that a minority of people infected with COVID-19 transmitted most infections.
- More than half of infections were spread before infected people developed symptoms.
- The findings could help inform better policies to control the spread of COVID-19 while balancing economic impact.

Countries around the world have tried a combination of approaches to slow the spread of COVID-19. Some strategies focus on isolating people who have the virus and identifying their close contacts. Other approaches affect the entire population, like mask-wearing, social distancing, and stay-at-home orders. Because multiple strategies are usually in effect, it has been hard to determine the impact of each.

To better control the pandemic, it's critical to understand the factors driving its spread. A team of researchers, led by Drs. Kaiyuan Sun and Cecile Viboud of NIH's Fogarty International Center (FIC) and Dr. Hongjie Yu of Fudan University (Shanghai, China), studied the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in China's Hunan province. Their findings were published on January 15, 2021, in *Science*.

Hunan was among the first regions in the world to have a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak. They quickly brought their outbreak under control using several approaches. Strict lockdown measures restricted people from

leaving their houses except for essential tasks. People were required to wear masks and maintain physical distance when in public.

Those who were infected were treated in dedicated hospitals. Careful contact tracing identified anyone who might have been exposed. These contacts were quarantined in medical observation facilities.

The researchers examined detailed records from 1,178 COVID-19 patients. The cases occurred between January and April 2020. They also looked at data on more than 15,000 of their close contacts.

Using the contact tracing records, the research team developed a series of models to study COVID-19 transmission in Hunan. The models revealed that a minority of people infected with SARS-CoV-2 were responsible for transmitting most cases. About 80% of cases were spread by 15% of infected individuals. Similar to other studies, the researchers found that the risk of infection was higher with longer exposure. Close social interaction also increased transmission risk.

Members of the same family posed the highest risk of infection. Lockdown measures, while decreasing transmission from other sources, increased the likelihood of infection within a household. The risk of infection, per contact, was lowest in the community—riding public transit and visiting food and entertainment venues. The researchers could not evaluate transmission risk in schools or workplaces, however, because of lack of data.



In line with other reports, the team found that people with COVID-19 were most infectious in the period just before they developed symptoms. The analysis showed that 53% of transmission in Hunan occurred during the presymptomatic phase of infection.

The researchers used these results to evaluate different interventions. They found that Hunan was able to slow transmission by quickly isolating COVID-19 cases and quarantining contacts. However, they determined that controlling the epidemic solely with isolation and quarantine is not feasible. Community-wide measures like mask-wearing, increased telework, and restrictions on large gatherings must also be put in place to control spread.

The authors also note that the capacity for testing and contact tracing are crucial for maintaining control over infection rates when easing lockdowns.

“Our findings give insight into the biology and behavior that drive COVID-19 spread,” Sun says. “We hope that this evidence helps to guide the design of targeted and sustainable strategies to control SARS-CoV-2 transmission.” □

Excerpted from [Study examines measures to slow COVID-19 spread | National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)



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- Calling the library between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day OR
- Email us at library@salemva.gov OR
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We will post a link on our [website home page](#) to view this newsletter online. Archived versions of the online version are posted on our website on the Adult Resources page.

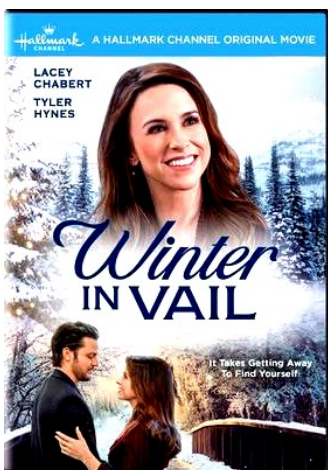
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CONTACT-FREE PICKUP is available in our front lobby every day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for picking up requested items. Please call before heading to the library so that we can check out your items to your account before you get here. *Thank you!*

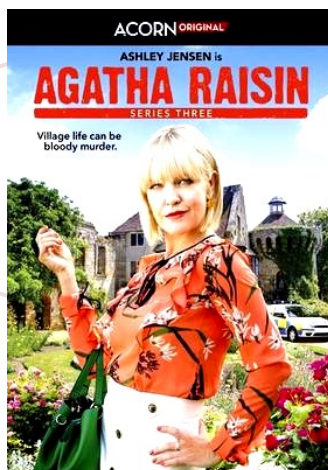
LEAVE IT TO A LIBRARIAN For Adult Fiction: The library is closed and you don't want to spend hours browsing the online catalog? Call us, email us, or click the link on our website home page to give a hint or two (genre, authors you like). Tell us how many books you want. We'll fill a bag and leave it in the front foyer for you.

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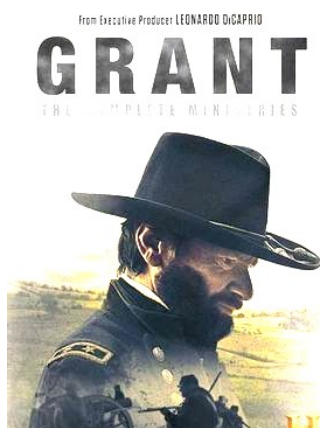
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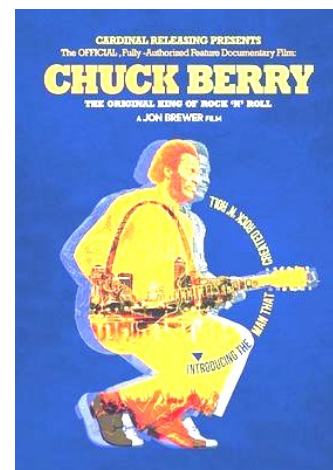
Hallmark romance DVD
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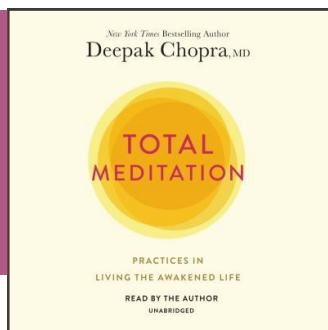


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